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MEMORANDUM FOR: P - Michael Schneider
THROUGH : P/D - Pete Gratto
FROM : P/DH - Saul S. Gelter
SUBJECT : Afghan Media Project Update

This morning I spoke with Dean Maitre of Boston University and Associate Dean Goldman in Peshawar and the following information was provided:

X o BU is getting mixed signals on the ground in Pakistan. It appears that a contact has confidentially informed them that the GOP in fact does not want the project to get off the ground. At the same time, it appears that the GOP is moving ahead to name a director for the Afghan News Service (ANS). In the latter connection, BU feels that the director issue is merely a delaying tactic to continue to stall the program.

+ o BU representatives in Pakistan have an appointment with the GOP (probably N. Shaikh) early next week. A determination will be made after this meeting whether to hold to the original plan involving the establishment of the ANS, or for BU to proceed with an alternate plan which will be presented to the Agency. BU has stated that it "will not come back empty-handed from Pakistan" and is determined to accomplish the objectives and goals of the program. It will move to train Afghans without an organization being created in the initial stages, if necessary.

+ o BU's alternate plan will be discussed with the Post to assure that all reasonable approaches are looked at before action is taken. At the present time, the alternate plan will focus on working with existing Afghan news services and individuals/groups involved in news gathering and information dissemination. A comprehensive program will be developed which will include training of Afghans in media and the organization and implementation of a marketing and distribution program (probably outside Pakistan).

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o BU is planning to dispatch its senior video trainer to Peshawar next week. Associate Dean Goldman is planning to return to the US o/a January 26. This will place three BU trainers in Peshawar. The video equipment and 15 cameras ordered from Japan by P/DH will arrive in Islamabad on January 19 for use by BU in the training program. In addition, the following information is provided for this update:

o In anticipation of an alternate plan being presented, P/DH has cabled the Post to get an update on the existing news and information groups, particularly those cited in the Koehler Report - The Agency Afghan Press (offices in Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Quetta, Karachi and London), The Agency Islamic Press, The Afghan Information and Documentation Center (Akbar), The Afghan Information Center (Majrooh), the Jamiat-e-Islami Film Center and the Hezb-i-Islami Film Center. All information developed will be passed on to BU for consideration.

o It is expected that Charles Dunbar (STATE/NEA) will suggest looking into the possibility of working the Agency Afghan Press (AAP) into the planning for the Media Project. In this regard, P/DH spoke to a senior editor of the AAP in London today to get an update on operations and distribution activities. A separate memorandum of conversation will be prepared. (Jack Koehler was ambivalent in his report on the AAP, and an update and reevaluation is in order).

o STATE/NEA has informed P/DH that Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Michael Armacost, will leave for Pakistan shortly and that the Afghan Media Project is planned for his agenda re conversations with the Embassy and GOP.

o BU has been requested to provide the Agency with work plans and budgets to cover the responsibilities remaining under the former Hearst grant (implementation), the original BU grant and a proposal covering Afghan News Service (or a variation thereof) operations for a 12-month period, trainee expenses, equipment, etc. The Agency's FY87 allocation to the project of \$500,000 will relate to the latter proposal.

o P/DH is still awaiting a call from State for a meeting to facilitate the proposal of legislative action which would allow other agencies (AID) to participate in the Media Project. It is anticipated that GC and AID lawyers will carry the ball at this meeting, which is expected to occur in one week.

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+ o PL reports that attorneys for Michael Gartner, President of the ASNE, have appealed the Agency's decision to withhold all other documentation requested under the FOIA except the media project grant documents. In addition, the Boston Herald is working on a current story about the project.

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